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Near East and South Asia Review

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Supplement
23 May 1986

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Brief

India: Difficulties Selling Surplus Grain

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Some articles are preliminary views of a subject or speculative, but the contents normally will be coordinated as appropriate with other offices within CIA. Occasionally an article will represent the views of a single analyst; these items will be designated as noncoordinated views.

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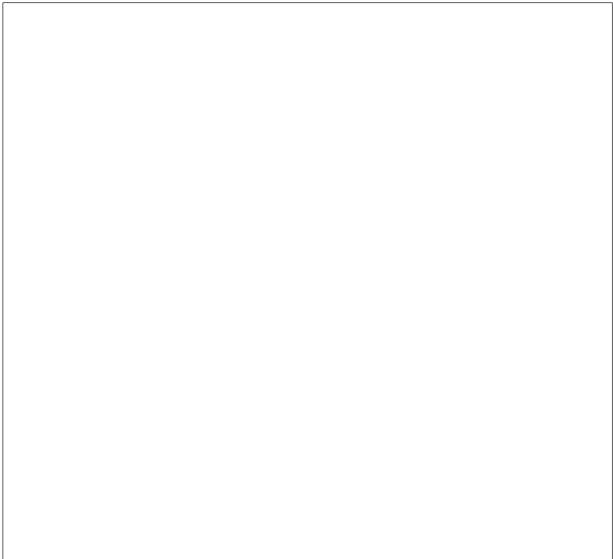
Article

Afghanistan in April

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During a three-week offensive in April the Afghan Army overran two insurgent camps in Paktia Province and Pakistani and Soviet or Afghan fighter aircraft clashed for the first time. To follow up the success of the Paktia offensive, Afghan regime forces will conduct other sizable counterinsurgency actions in the border region in the near term. Efforts to quell the insurgency in Qandahar made little headway during the month, while Soviet and Afghan regime forces continued operations to slow the flow of materiel to the guerrillas in Afghanistan.

Afghan Army Success in Paktia



The Afghan Army's performance in the battles in Paktia suggests that it is making some progress. Although Soviet air and artillery support were critical to the outcome of the operations, Afghan Army troops sustained the offensive and evidently suffered few defections.

The regime has heavily publicized its success in Paktia. It claimed destruction of large amounts of arms and equipment cached in the hill complex at Zhawar and exaggerated insurgent casualties—Kabul said it killed 3,000 guerrillas and wounded another 4,000. The loss of the Zhawar complex—with communications and administrative facilities, workshops, and stockpiles—was a clear setback for the guerrillas.

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The offensive led to the first air clash between the Pakistani Air Force and intruding aircraft from Afghanistan. Soviet or Afghan aircraft bombed insurgent positions several kilometers inside Pakistan nearly every day and fired on three Pakistani F-16s on 12 April. The Pakistanis, who have been flying regular combat air patrols along the border since late February, fired three AIM-9L Sidewinder air-to-air missiles and, shot down at least one aircraft. air violations continued after the shootdown.

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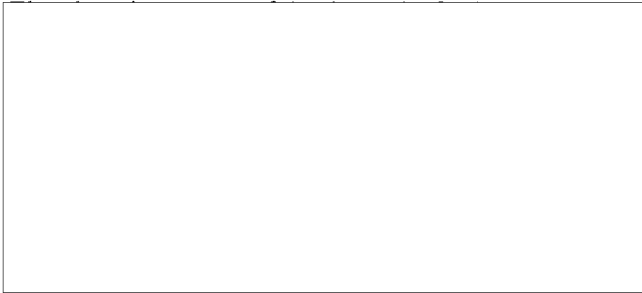
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Other Areas



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In western Afghanistan, military activity was comparatively light during April, mainly consisting of occasional airstrikes from Shindand. A battalion of self-propelled field guns [redacted]

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[redacted] probably had been in the area since December, when the Soviets also deployed two battalions of 240-mm mortars there. [redacted]

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The Soviets and the Afghan Government continued to prevent major insurgent actions in Kabul, according to the US Embassy. Although the guerrillas almost certainly assigned high priority to disrupting the eighth anniversary celebrations of the Communist coup on 27 April, the defensive measures instituted by the regime in the capital apparently checked the insurgents' capabilities for sizable attacks. [redacted]

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Outlook

The Paktia offensive probably was the prelude to heavier fighting this spring. The formula of Soviet air and artillery support for Afghan infantry seems to have worked recently, and the Soviets probably will use it again. We believe, however, that the Army will have to conduct several more successful operations to demonstrate that it is more than a weak extension of the Soviet Army. [redacted]

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The Afghan Army's successful offensive in Paktia may discourage the insurgents from establishing additional large support complexes and from forming more conventional-style combat units, in our view. But reliance on small and highly mobile units will limit the damage that the insurgents can inflict in engagements. [redacted]

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The fighting in Qandahar evidently was stepped up by the guerrillas in response to Afghan regime and Soviet attacks this winter on base camps in Qandahar Province. [redacted] Hizbi Islami (Khalis) guerrillas spearheaded an effort to coordinate military action in the city and province. In particular, the insurgents hoped to phase attacks so that enemy forces could not respond effectively to any one of the strikes. [redacted]

[redacted]
media accounts termed fighting in the city as intense during the month. [redacted]

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Brief**India****Difficulties Selling Surplus Grain**

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India is having difficulty finding export markets for its surplus wheat and rice because of the grain's low quality and high price. Government-owned winter grain stocks total about 30 million metric tons (Mt)—an increase of about 30 percent over last year. India's storage facilities, however, hold only 20 Mt, with the remainder stored outside. The threat that the approaching June monsoon will damage unstored grain and hamper loading operations has prompted New Delhi to urgently seek customers in Indonesia, the Middle East, and South America. Meanwhile, India's largest grain customer—the Soviet Union—has requested that the 225,000-Mt balance of grain under contract from India be US or Canadian wheat.

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